

Open Arms Annual Report – December 2016

We are very grateful for God's blessings upon Open Arms in 2016. The "Amigos" program matching fund and other donations have allowed the ministry to finish the year in a sound financial position. Through the support of our board members, volunteers, individual donors, churches and businesses, we are able to show our witness, love and compassion to the Hispanic members of our community.

God is working in many Hispanic families in our area, teaching them to be leaders in the community. A small Bible study group was organized with the purpose of giving personal and spiritual guidance, and providing tools needed to reach unsaved people for Jesus. We can perceive the development of Hispanic leaders around us, and their love to serve in God's kingdom. One example is the men's music group that treated us with several songs at our annual fundraiser banquet, as well as the testimonies of Oscar and Gilberto about how Open Arms has helped in their challenging situations. A group of young women performed a dance, showing their love for our Lord Jesus.

Another one of God's wonders is the work of the five-church group in Wayne County. The marriage enrichment events that took place once a month were a special blessing. Hispanic couples interacted with Anglo couples, and they laughed and learned a lot together. In addition, the Vacation Bible School was another combined effort that was a success. We had a good number of Hispanic kids that learned about how Jesus is awesome, and this year the offering benefited Open Arms. Praise the Lord for what He is doing among us!

Our 13th Hispanic Retreat was an occasion of prayer, rejoicing, family time and lots of fun. Around 140 people came from different Mennonite churches in Ohio. This event always encourages our groups, and this year we could see the Holy Spirit moving all over the place. Praise the Father for His amazing grace!

The Hispanic ministry addresses many different needs, such as taking people to doctors, visiting in the hospitals, helping with legal advice, counseling, getting driver's licenses, doing translation or helping to find jobs. Haroldo helped to find legal advice for many Hispanic refugees that came from the Southern border. Immigration reform will be vital to stop the separation of families, the deaths in the desert and to bring peace and justice to our community.

To foster cross-cultural understanding, Haroldo organized a meeting with Orrville's chief of police, one of our immigration lawyers and a group of approximately 40 Hispanics. We had the opportunity to introduce the new chief, and he explained why it is important to have a trusting relationship between the police force and the Hispanic community. Later, the audience asked questions specifically about the racial profiling, that in their opinion, they have suffered in Orrville. We will continue our efforts to be a bridge between both groups.

The "Songs and Salsa" event in October was well attended, and we appreciate all the community support. This year we had Melvin Lopez and Jon Geiser featuring music from the Andes Mountains. In addition, the chips and wide variety of delicious salsas were a "blast," and the fellowship was awesome. We are also very thankful for the churches that organized fundraisers on our behalf – Sonnenburg, Berlin, and Crown Hill.

Thank you so much for your dedication to Open Arms. It is an honor to partner with you in the process of building God's kingdom here on Earth. Thank you also for your support, love and prayers. May the peace and the blessings of God be with you and your family!

Respectfully submitted,

Pastor Haroldo Nunes
Executive Director

Douglas L. Zehr
Board Chair